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jc777 U.S. PRO**UTILITY PATENT APPLICATION TRANSMITTAL**  
**(Large Entity)***(Only for new nonprovisional applications under 37 CFR 1.53(b))*Docket No.  
0112300/140Total Pages in this Submission  
71**TO THE ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS**Box Patent Application  
Washington, D.C. 20231

Transmitted herewith for filing under 35 U.S.C. 111(a) and 37 C.F.R. 1.53(b) is a new utility patent application for an invention entitled:

**GAMING DEVICE HAVING AN AWARD EXCHANGE BONUS ROUND AND METHOD FOR REVEALING AWARD EXCHANGE POSSIBILITIES**

and invented by:

Bayard S. Webb, Anthony J. Baerlocher, Jean M. Brossard, Joseph E. Kaminkow and Steven P. McGahn

If a **CONTINUATION APPLICATION**, check appropriate box and supply the requisite information:☐ **Continuation** ☐ **Divisional** ☐ **Continuation-in-part (CIP)** of prior application No.: \_\_\_\_\_

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Enclosed are:

**Application Elements**

1. ☒ Filing fee as calculated and transmitted as described below
2. ☒ Specification having 52 pages and including the following:
  - a. ☒ Descriptive Title of the Invention
  - b. ☐ Cross References to Related Applications *(if applicable)*
  - c. ☐ Statement Regarding Federally-sponsored Research/Development *(if applicable)*
  - d. ☐ Reference to Microfiche Appendix *(if applicable)*
  - e. ☒ Background of the Invention
  - f. ☒ Brief Summary of the Invention
  - g. ☒ Brief Description of the Drawings *(if drawings filed)*
  - h. ☒ Detailed Description
  - i. ☒ Claim(s) as Classified Below
  - j. ☒ Abstract of the Disclosure

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71

**Application Elements (Continued)**

3. ☒ Drawing(s) *(when necessary as prescribed by 35 USC 113)*
- a. ☒ Formal                      Number of Sheets                      10
- b. ☐ Informal                      Number of Sheets                      \_\_\_\_\_
4. ☒ Oath or Declaration
- a. ☐ Newly executed *(original or copy)*                      ☒ Unexecuted
- b. ☐ Copy from a prior application (37 CFR 1.63(d)) *(for continuation/divisional application only)*
- c. ☒ With Power of Attorney                      ☐ Without Power of Attorney
- d. ☐ DELETION OF INVENTOR(S)  
Signed statement attached deleting inventor(s) named in the prior application,  
see 37 C.F.R. 1.63(d)(2) and 1.33(b).
5. ☐ Incorporation By Reference *(usable if Box 4b is checked)*  
The entire disclosure of the prior application, from which a copy of the oath or declaration is supplied under Box 4b, is considered as being part of the disclosure of the accompanying application and is hereby incorporated by reference therein.
6. ☐ Computer Program in Microfiche *(Appendix)*
7. ☐ Nucleotide and/or Amino Acid Sequence Submission *(if applicable, all must be included)*
- a. ☐ Paper Copy
- b. ☐ Computer Readable Copy *(identical to computer copy)*
- c. ☐ Statement Verifying Identical Paper and Computer Readable Copy

**Accompanying Application Parts**

8. ☐ Assignment Papers *(cover sheet & document(s))*
9. ☐ 37 CFR 3.73(B) Statement *(when there is an assignee)*
10. ☐ English Translation Document *(if applicable)*
11. ☐ Information Disclosure Statement/PTO-1449                      ☐ Copies of IDS Citations
12. ☐ Preliminary Amendment
13. ☒ Acknowledgment postcard
14. ☒ Certificate of Mailing
- ☐ First Class                      ☒ Express Mail *(Specify Label No.):* EL387672650US

**UTILITY PATENT APPLICATION TRANSMITTAL**  
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**Accompanying Application Parts (Continued)**

15. ☐ Certified Copy of Priority Document(s) *(if foreign priority is claimed)*
16. ☐ Additional Enclosures *(please identify below):*

**Request That Application Not Be Published Pursuant To 35 U.S.C. 122(b)(2)**

17. ☐ Pursuant to 35 U.S.C. 122(b)(2), Applicant hereby requests that this patent application not be published pursuant to 35 U.S.C. 122(b)(1). Applicant hereby certifies that the invention disclosed in this application has not and will not be the subject of an application filed in another country, or under a multilateral international agreement, that requires publication of applications 18 months after filing of the application.

**Warning**

***An applicant who makes a request not to publish, but who subsequently files in a foreign country or under a multilateral international agreement specified in 35 U.S.C. 122(b)(2)(B)(i), must notify the Director of such filing not later than 45 days after the date of the filing of such foreign or international application. A failure of the applicant to provide such notice within the prescribed period shall result in the application being regarded as abandoned, unless it is shown to the satisfaction of the Director that the delay in submitting the notice was unintentional.***

**UTILITY PATENT APPLICATION TRANSMITTAL**  
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(Only for new nonprovisional applications under 37 CFR 1.53(b))

Docket No.  
0112300/140

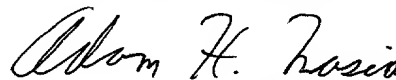
Total Pages in this Submission  
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**Fee Calculation and Transmittal**

**CLAIMS AS FILED**

For	#Filed	#Allowed	#Extra	Rate	Fee
Total Claims	37	- 20 =	17	x \$18.00	\$306.00
Indep. Claims	10	- 3 =	7	x \$80.00	\$560.00
Multiple Dependent Claims (check if applicable) <input type="checkbox"/>					\$0.00
BASIC FEE					\$710.00
OTHER FEE (specify purpose) _____					\$0.00
TOTAL FILING FEE					\$1,576.00

- ☒ A check in the amount of **\$1,576.00** to cover the filing fee is enclosed.
- ☒ The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge and credit Deposit Account No. **02-1818** as described below. A duplicate copy of this sheet is enclosed.
- ☐ Charge the amount of \_\_\_\_\_ as filing fee.
- ☒ Credit any overpayment.
- ☒ Charge any additional filing fees required under 37 C.F.R. 1.16 and 1.17.
- ☐ Charge the issue fee set in 37 C.F.R. 1.18 at the mailing of the Notice of Allowance, pursuant to 37 C.F.R. 1.311(b).

  
Signature

Adam H. Masia  
Reg. No. 35,602

Dated: October 12, 2000

cc:

**CERTIFICATE OF MAILING BY "EXPRESS MAIL" (37 CFR 1.10)**

Applicant(s): Bayard S. Webb, et al.

Docket No.

0112300/140

Serial No.

Filing Date

Examiner

Group Art Unit

Invention: **GAMING DEVICE HAVING AN AWARD EXCHANGE BONUS ROUND AND METHOD FOR REVEALING AWARD EXCHANGE POSSIBILITIES**JC939 U.S. PTO  
09/689510

10/12/00

I hereby certify that the following correspondence:

Patent Application

*(Identify type of correspondence)*

is being deposited with the United States Postal Service "Express Mail Post Office to Addressee" service under 37 CFR 1.10 in an envelope addressed to: The Assistant Commissioner for Patents, Washington, D.C. 20231 on

October 12, 2000*(Date)*Deborah Dean*(Typed or Printed Name of Person Mailing Correspondence)*Deborah Dean*(Signature of Person Mailing Correspondence)*EL387672650US*("Express Mail" Mailing Label Number)***Note: Each paper must have its own certificate of mailing.**



# **GAMING DEVICE HAVING AN AWARD EXCHANGE BONUS ROUND AND METHOD FOR REVEALING AWARD EXCHANGE POSSIBILITIES**

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## **DESCRIPTION**

The present invention relates in general to a gaming device, and more particularly to a gaming device having a bonus round comprising an apparatus and method for providing an award to a player, enabling the player to exchange the award for one of a higher or lower value and revealing the outcome of the player's choice in an exciting and entertaining manner.

20

## **BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION**

Gaming devices currently exist with bonus rounds in which a player has one or more opportunities to choose masked bonus awards from a pattern or group of masked awards displayed to the player. When the

player chooses a masked award from the pattern or group, the game removes the mask and either awards the player with a bonus value or terminates the bonus round with a bonus terminator. The outcome depends upon whether the player selects an award or a terminator.

5           In the above game, the controller of the gaming device randomly places a predetermined number of masked awards and terminators in the pattern at the beginning of the bonus round and maintains the positioning until the bonus round terminates. When the player selects a masked award, the player receives the value of the award, and the game typically  
10 displays a message that the player may continue and enables the player to select another masked award. The player then selects another masked award, and the process continues until the player selects a masked terminator. European Patent Application No. EP 0 945 837 A2 filed on March 18, 1999 and assigned on its face to WMS Gaming, Inc. discloses  
15 a bonus scheme of this type.

Gaming machines also currently exist with bonus rounds in which the game selects or determines the player's award. PCT patent application PCT/AU97/00121 entitled, Slot Machine Game with Roaming Wild Card, having a publication date of September 4, 1997, discloses an  
20 example. In this invention, a slot machine having a video display contains a plurality of rotatable reels with game symbols. When the player receives a triggering symbol or combination, the game produces a bonus symbol.



The bonus symbol moves from game symbol to game symbol temporarily changing the game symbol to a bonus symbol. If the change results in a winning combination, the player receives an award.

In the first known game, the “go-until” or “do-until” bonus round can  
5 end quite quickly if the player selects a terminator early in the bonus  
round. The player blindly selects masked awards until selecting the bonus  
terminator, which is immediately displayed. The player knows nothing  
about the location of any particular award, and there is no logical incentive  
to select any particular masked award as opposed to any another masked  
10 award. Choosing a masked award also poses no risk to a previously  
accumulated award. That is, there is no incentive to stop selecting. The  
only logical course is for the player to continue selecting until selecting a  
terminator. The player’s involvement in the bonus round and thus the  
player’s level of enjoyment and excitement from the bonus round is thus  
15 limited.

The second known game has even less player interaction. The  
game completely determines the bonus round award, and the player has  
no affect on the outcome. The player is a mere observer to the bonus  
round sequence and participates only by receiving an award. In both  
20 games, the player is not prompted to calculate, weigh options, or explore  
any consequences of any action. To increase player excitement and  
enjoyment, it is desirable to provide a gaming device, and more

specifically a bonus round of a gaming device, which prompts a player to calculate, weigh options and explore the consequences of the player's selection.

In the known "go-until" or "do-until" bonus round, the game reveals  
5 all unselected awards and terminators associated with the pattern after the player selects a terminator. The application makes no specific reference as to how or in which manner the game reveals the unselected awards or terminators. Revealing the masks from selected and unselected awards and other gaming device components is well known in the art. No known  
10 game, however, reveals awards or other gaming device components in any particular manner or employs any particular method of deciding which awards, etc. to reveal first, second, etc. It should be appreciated, that in a game which prompts a player to calculate, weigh options, and explore the consequences of the player's selection, it is desirable to reveal the  
15 consequences of the player's selection in a manner that maximizes player excitement and enjoyment.

## SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention provides a gaming device, and more  
20 particularly a bonus round of a gaming device, having an award generation apparatus and method, whereby the game awards an initial award to a player, discloses to a player that a higher valued enticement

The present invention provides the player with the option to keep the initial award or exchange the initial award for one of preferably three masked awards: a high value enticement award, an intermediate consolation award and a low value consolation award. The game can then repeat this sequence any number of times. The player selects a selector, associated with the player's choice, i.e., an initial award selector or a selector associated with the desired masked award. The selectors are preferably displayed on a touch screen display device connected to the gaming device. The game thereby enables the player to simply touch the desired masked award.

If the player decides to forgo the initial award and elect to exchange, and selects the low valued award, the game reveals the intermediate award first, the selected low valued award second, and the high valued award third. If the player picks the intermediate award, the game reveals the low valued award first, the selected intermediate award second, and the high valued award third.



award. The door can either be dedicated to a particular selector, or can open up to reveal an entire sequence of awards as described above.

It is therefore an object of the present invention to provide a bonus round of gaming device, wherein the game prompts a player to calculate, weigh options, and explore the consequences of the player's selection.

Another object of the present invention is that in a gaming device that prompts a player to calculate, weigh options, and explore the consequences of the player's selection, to reveal the consequences of the player's selection in a manner that attempts to maximize player excitement and enjoyment.

Other objects, features and advantages of the invention will be apparent from the following detailed disclosure, taken in conjunction with the accompanying sheets of drawings, wherein like numerals refer to like parts, elements, components, steps and processes.

15

## BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Fig. 1 is a front elevational view of a general embodiment of the gaming device of the present invention;

Fig. 2 is a schematic block diagram of the electronic configuration of one embodiment of the gaming device of the present invention;

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Fig. 3 is a front elevational view of the display device illustrating one embodiment of the present invention, wherein the game discloses that an initial award and an enticement award exist;

Fig. 4 is a front elevational view of the display device illustrating  
5 another embodiment of the present invention, wherein the game discloses  
the value of the initial award and that an enticement award exists;

Fig. 5 is a front elevational view of the display device illustrating a further embodiment of the present invention, wherein the game discloses that an initial award exists and the value of the enticement award;

10            Fig. 6 is a front elevational view of the display device illustrating a preferred embodiment of the present invention, wherein the game discloses the value of an initial award and the value of the enticement award;

Fig. 7 is a front elevational view of the display device illustrating a yet another embodiment of the present invention, wherein the game discloses the value of an initial award, the value of the enticement award and the values of consolation awards;

Fig. 8 is a front elevational view of the display device illustrating another example of the embodiment of Fig. 7, wherein the game contains  
20 and discloses the values of the initial award, multiple enticement awards and multiple consolation awards;

Fig. 9 is a process flow diagram illustrating the award exchange method of the present invention, wherein the game can include multiple award exchange opportunities and one or more value disclosures;

Fig. 10 is a chart illustrating the reveal sequence of the present invention, wherein the player selects either an initial award, a low valued masked award, an intermediate masked award, or a high valued masked award;

Fig. 11 is a chart illustrating the reveal sequence of the present invention, wherein the player can select from an initial award, a low valued masked award, a plurality of intermediate masked awards, and a plurality of high valued masked awards;

Fig. 12 is a front elevational view illustrating an example of a separate electro-mechanical display mechanism in a masking position, said display mechanism operating in conjunction with the display device to reveal an award of the present invention;

Fig. 13 is a front elevational view illustrating an example of a separate electro-mechanical display mechanism in an open position, revealing a secondary display operating in conjunction with the display device to reveal selected awards of the present invention;

Fig. 14 is a top-front perspective view of a preferred secondary display device embodiment of the present invention employing two rollers and an award displaying belt in tension with such rollers; and

Fig. 15 is a front elevational view illustrating an alternative embodiment, wherein the separate display mechanism reveals all of the awards of the present invention.

5

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

### Gaming Device and Electronics

Referring now to the drawings, Fig. 1 generally illustrates a gaming device 10 of one embodiment of the present invention, which is preferably a slot machine having the controls, displays and features of a conventional slot machine. Gaming device 10 is constructed so that a player can operate gaming device 10 while standing or sitting. However, it should be appreciated that gaming device 10 can be constructed as a pub-style table-top game (not shown) that a player can operate preferably while sitting. Gaming device 10 can also be implemented as a program code stored in a detachable cartridge for operating a hand-held video game device. Also, gaming device 10 can be implemented as a program code stored on a disk or other memory device which a player can use in a desktop or laptop personal computer or other computerized platform. Gaming device 10 can incorporate any game such as slot, poker or keno. The symbols used on and in gaming device 10 may be in mechanical, electrical or in video form.



As illustrated in Fig. 1, gaming device 10 includes a coin slot 12 and bill acceptor 14 where the player inserts money, coins or tokens. The player can place coins in the coin slot 12 or paper money in the bill acceptor 14. Other devices could be used for accepting payment such as readers or validators for credit cards or debit cards. When a player inserts money in gaming device 10, a number of credits corresponding to the amount deposited is shown in a credit display 16. The present invention preferably employs or uses credits, however, the present invention is not limited to the use of credits and contemplates employing other units of value such as money. For purposes of describing and claiming this invention, the term "credit" includes any unit of value such as a gaming device credit or actual money.

After depositing the appropriate amount of money, a player can begin the game by pulling arm 18 or by pushing play button 20. Play button 20 can be any play activator used by the player which starts any game or sequence of events in the gaming device.

Referring to Fig. 1, gaming device 10 also includes a bet display 22 and a bet one button 24. The player places a bet by pushing the bet one button 24. The player can increase the bet by one credit each time the player pushes the bet one button 24. When the player pushes the bet one button 24, the number of credits shown in the credit display 16 decreases

by one, and the number of credits shown in the bet display 22 increases by one.

Gaming device 10 also has a paystop display 28 which contains a plurality of reels 30, preferably three to five reels in mechanical or video form. Each reel 30 displays a plurality of symbols such as bells, hearts, martinis, fruits, cactuses, numbers, cigars, letters, bars or other images, which preferably correspond to a theme associated with the gaming device 10. If the reels 30 are in video form, the gaming device 10 preferably displays the video reels 30 in a display device described below. Furthermore, gaming device 10 preferably includes speakers 34 for making sounds or playing music.

At any time during the game, a player may “cash out” and thereby receive a number of coins corresponding to the number of remaining credits by pushing a cash out button 26. When the player “cashes out,” the player receives the coins in a coin payout tray 36. The gaming device 10 may employ other payout mechanisms such as credit slips redeemable by a cashier or electronically recordable cards that keep track of the player's credits.

With respect to electronics, the controller of gaming device 10 preferably includes the electronic configuration generally illustrated in Fig. 2, which has: a processor 38; a memory device 40 for storing program code or other data; a display device 32 (i.e., a liquid crystal display)

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Referring now to Fig. 3, an enlarged front elevational view of the display device 32 is shown containing award selection components of the present invention. The display device includes an initial award selector 52 and a plurality of masking award selectors 54, 56 and 58. An initial award is the current award given to the player and is the award generated by the bonus round if the player decides not to exchange for one of the masked awards. The masking award selectors individually mask one or more enticement awards and one or more consolation awards. Enticement

awards have values greater than the initial award and consolation awards preferably have values less than the initial award. The consolation awards are preferably greater than zero. In an embodiment where the present invention is a stand alone game rather than a bonus round, however, one  
5 or more consolation award can be zero.

As mentioned above, the display device 32 preferably includes a touch screen 46 and an associated touch screen controller 48. Each of the selectors 54, 56 and 58 on display device 32 is thus preferably a player selectable area, which sends a unique input signal to the controller  
10 of the present invention. Alternatively, the present invention contemplates providing one or more front panel mountable input devices 33, which are well known in the art, and that enable a player to select one or more selectors from the groups.

The game also preferably includes a visual and/or audio prompt.  
15 Fig. 3 illustrates the prompt 60 as a visual message on the display device 32. The prompt 60 is shown as a literal visual message, however, the game could also display a prompt in graphical or tabulated form. It should be appreciated that the game can also provide an audio prompt in place of or in addition to the written prompt 60. The audio prompt is preferably  
20 produced shortly after the game displays the bonus round screen of Fig. 3 and can be repeated until the player makes a selection.

A prompt, in general, quickly sets forth the operation of the bonus round, namely, the boundaries of the proposed award exchange. The exchange preferably sets forth the stakes for the player, including some indication of the risk and potential award. As will be illustrated, the  
5 present invention contemplates providing more or less risk and award information to the player. The player thereafter makes a selection with this information.

Fig. 3 illustrates an award selection embodiment, wherein the prompt 60 discloses a minimum amount of information necessary to  
10 enable the player to play the game. The prompt 60 discloses that one of the selectors 54, 56 or 58 contain more credits than the player's current credits contained in the initial award selector 52. The player does not know the value of the initial award 52 or of any of the masking selectors 54, 56 and 58. Nevertheless, the information does inform the player that  
15 there exists at least a one in three chance of increasing the player's award. The prompt discloses no information as to the values of the two remaining of the masking selectors.

In the award selection embodiment of Fig. 3 and in all succeeding selection embodiments, the game can employ more than one initial award  
20 selectors 52. In this instance, the prompt 60 includes a suitable message, such as, "One of the selections A, B, or C has more credits than either of

your current credits. You can select one of your current credits or try for a higher value.”

Referring now to Fig. 4, another award selection embodiment is illustrated, wherein the game visually discloses more information than in the embodiment of Fig. 3. In this embodiment, the initial award selector 52 and the prompt 60 disclose the value of the initial award, e.g., the phrase, “You now have 250 credits.” The game can place the disclosure value anywhere, as long as a player can readily associate the disclosure to the initial award selector 52. The prompt 60 sets forth that one of the masking selectors 54, 56 and 58 contains more credits than the player’s 250 current credits. The player has no idea how many more credits are obtainable, nor the relative values of the other two selectors. The player does know the value of the “safe” play, i.e., selecting the initial award selector 52.

In the award selection embodiment of Fig. 4 and in all preceding and succeeding selection embodiments, the game can employ an initial award selector 52 having more than one initial award. For instance if there are two initial awards, the prompt 60 includes a suitable message, such as, “Two of the selections A, B, or C have more combined credits than your current 500 combined credits. You can keep both of your current credits or pick any two of A, B, or C and try for a higher value.” Here, selecting the initial award selector 52 selects both initial awards.



In any of the embodiments illustrated herein, the game can provide any number of masking selectors, such as the selectors 54, 56 and 58. A predetermined number of masking selectors associate with enticement awards, i.e., awards having values greater than the initial award. The remainder of the selectors associate with consolation awards, i.e., awards having values less than the initial award. The present invention also contemplates a consolation award having an equal value to one or more initial awards. It should be appreciated that adding more initial awards and more masking selectors complicates the player's decision.

Referring now to Fig. 6, a preferred award selection embodiment is illustrated, wherein the game visually discloses more information than in the embodiments of Figs. 3, 4 and 5. In this embodiment, the initial award



possible payouts. With an intuitive feel for the range of consolation awards, the experienced player can better gage the risk/reward ratio for selecting a masking selector.

The present invention contemplates randomly choosing the initial  
5 award, the enticement award and the consolation awards from separate  
databases (not shown), which is well known in the art of manufacturing  
gaming devices. The initial awards are therefore preferably randomly  
selected from a database (not illustrated) having a middle range of values.  
The enticement awards are preferably randomly selected from a database  
10 (not illustrated) having a higher range of values. The consolation awards  
are preferably randomly selected from a database (not shown) having a  
lower range of values. It should be appreciated that upon random  
selection, an initial award can be relatively desirable or undesirable and an  
enticement award can be relatively enticing or not enticing. If, as above,  
15 the initial award is 250 and the enticement award is 470 credits, the player  
may decide that 250 is enough. If the initial award is 90 and the  
enticement award is 405, the player may opt to play for a 315 credit  
increase (i.e.,  $405 - 90$ ) even though the enticement award is lower than  
in the previous example (i.e., 405 v. 470).

20 Referring now to Fig. 7, one example of yet another award  
selection embodiment is illustrated, wherein the game visually discloses  
more information than in the preferred embodiment of Fig. 6. In this

The player here knows how many more credits are obtainable from one of the selectors and also knows the possible losses from the other two selectors. The player can determine that the average of the masked awards is 200  $((470 + 100 + 30)/3)$ . The player can then optimally determine to keep the “safe” initial award and not risk choosing one of the masking selectors, since the initial award (250) is more than the average masked award (200).

Referring now to Fig. 8, another example of the award selection embodiment of Fig. 7 is illustrated, wherein the game provides a plurality of enticement and consolation awards. In this example, the initial award selector 52 and the prompt 60 disclose the value of the initial award, e.g., the phrase, "You now have 250 credits." The prompt 60 also discloses the

The prompt 60 further discloses the consolation award values associated with the masking selectors 54, 56, 58, 62 and 64, i.e., the phrase , “one (of

In this example, the player again knows how many more credits are obtainable from two of the selectors and also knows the possible losses from the other two selectors. The player can determine that the average award value is 262  $((550 + 470 + 230 + 50 + 10)/5)$ . The player can then optimally determine not to keep the “safe” initial award and to risk choosing one of the masking selectors, since the initial award (250) is less than the average award (262).

begins, as indicated by the oval 100, the present invention provides one of the following disclosures: (i) a disclosure that an enticement award exists as indicated by the block 102; (ii) a disclosure of the initial award value

and that an enticement award exists as indicated by the block 104; (iii) a disclosure of the enticement award value and that an initial award exists as indicated by the block 106; (iv) a disclosure of the initial and enticement award values as indicated by the block 108; and (v) a disclosure of the initial award, at least one enticement award and at least one consolation award as indicated by the block 110. The game enables the player to keep the initial award or try for an enticement award, as indicated by the block 112. After the player's selection, the game provides the appropriate award as indicated by block 114. Block 116 illustrates that the game contemplates providing the player with a plurality of award exchange opportunities, as indicated by the diamond 116. The present invention can employ different disclosures, i.e., one of the disclosures indicated by blocks 102, 104, 106, 108 and 110, in different award exchange opportunities. When the player exhausts all of such opportunities, the game or bonus round ends, as indicated by the oval 118.

### Reveal Embodiments

Referring now to Fig. 10, a chart of the reveal sequence of the present invention is displayed illustrating each of the situations, wherein the player selects the initial award, the low valued masked award, an intermediate masked award, and the high valued masked award. The chart provides three masked awards as illustrated in Fig. 6. The method

Row 68 of the chart of Fig. 10 contains chart headings. The chart heading 70 includes the player's selection. The chart heading 72 includes the award that the game first reveals based upon the chart heading entry. The chart heading 74 includes the award that the game secondly reveals based upon the chart heading entry. The chart heading 76 includes the award that the game thirdly reveals based upon the chart heading entry.

In a preferred touch screen embodiment, the revealed or unmasked awards preferably occupy the same area of the display device 32 (Figs. 1, 3-8) as do their associated masking selectors (Figs. 3-8). Alternatively, the game can reveal the award next to its associated masking selector. The game can further alternatively provide one area in which the game reveals all the awards and highlight the selector of the currently revealed award, thus designating the award's association. In any case, the present method determines in which order the awards are unmasked.

Alternatively, when the player elects play it safe and keep the initial award, the game reveals each award simultaneously. It should be appreciated that once the player keeps the initial award, the player's fate is determined and the anticipation provided by the reveal sequence drops. Even so, revealing the awards after the player selects the initial award provides some measure of excitement, wherein the player thinks, e.g., "I was going to pick the masking selector that covered the enticement award. I'll get this game next time." For the sake of expeditious play, however, the implementor can decide to reveal all awards simultaneously.

Referring to the row 80 of Fig. 10, the player elected to forgo the initial award and try for the enticement award, as can be seen under the



heading 70, and selected the low valued consolation award. In this situation, the game first reveals the intermediate consolation award, as shown under the heading 72. The game then reveals the player's selection of the low valued consolation award, as shown under the heading 74. Finally, the game reveals the high valued enticement award, as shown under the heading 76.

Referring to the row 82 of Fig. 10, the player elected to forgo the initial award and try for the enticement award, as can be seen under the heading 70, and selected the intermediate consolation award. In this situation, the game first reveals the low valued consolation award, as shown under the heading 72. The game then reveals the player's selection of the intermediate consolation award, as shown under the heading 74. Finally, the game reveals the high valued enticement award, as shown under the heading 76.

Referring to the row 84 of Fig. 10, the player elected to forgo the initial award and try for the enticement award, as can be seen under the heading 70, and successfully selected the enticement award. In this situation, the game only specifies that the high value or enticement award be revealed last. That is, the game randomly determines whether to reveal the low value or the intermediate consolation award first, as shown under the heading 72. The game then reveals the remaining consolation award second, as shown under the heading 74. The game can set a 50%

chance of revealing either the low or intermediate consolation award first or maintain any percentage as desired by the implementor. Finally, the game reveals the high valued enticement award, as shown under the heading 76.

5           The present invention preferably employs two rules in determining the order in which to reveal awards: (1) the game preferably never reveals the player's selection first; and (2) the game preferably always reveals the highest valued enticement award last. These rules are based upon two assumptions. The first assumption is that as awards are  
10   revealed, anticipation builds up in the player, which increases excitement and enjoyment. Making the player wait to see the player's award promotes anticipation. The second assumption is that, if the player is shown and thus knows the value of the enticement award up front, when the game reveals the enticement award, the player will feel a let down.  
15   That is, the player is waiting to see where the game has hidden the enticement award. Once the game reveals the enticement award, the excitement level drops. Keeping the enticement award concealed maintains the excitement level and further promotes anticipation.

Referring now to Fig. 11, a chart of the reveal sequence of the  
20   present invention is illustrated, wherein the player can select from an initial award, a low valued masked award, a plurality of intermediate masked awards, and a plurality of high valued masked awards. The chart applies





Referring to the row 106 of Fig. 11, the player elected to forgo the  
5 initial award and try for the enticement award, as can be seen under the  
heading 88, and selected one of the intermediate consolation awards. In  
this situation, the game first reveals either the low valued consolation  
award or the non-selected intermediate value consolation award, as  
shown under the heading 90. The game then randomly reveals the  
10 remaining low valued consolation award or the non-selected intermediate  
consolation award as described above, and as shown under the heading  
92. Thirdly, the game randomly selects and reveals an enticement award,  
as illustrated under heading 96. The game then reveals the player's  
selection of the intermediate valued consolation award, as shown under  
15 the heading 98. Finally, the game fifthly reveals the remaining high value  
enticement award, as indicated under the heading 100.

Referring to the row 108 of Fig. 11, the player elected to forgo the initial award and try for the enticement award, as can be seen under the heading 88, and successfully selected one of the high valued enticement awards. In this situation, the game specifies that selected enticement award be revealed last and the unselected high value enticement award third to last. That is, the game randomly determines whether to reveal the

low value or the intermediate consolation awards first and second, as shown under the headings 90 and 92, respectively, and as disclosed in connection with row 102. The game thirdly reveals the unselected high value enticement award and fourthly reveals the remaining low or  
5 intermediate consolation award to build suspense in the final two picks. Finally, the game reveals the selected high value enticement award, as indicated under the heading 100.

#### Mechanical Display

10 Referring now to Fig. 12, a front elevational view of an example of a separate electro-mechanical display mechanism 110 is illustrated, which operates in conjunction with a secondary the display device (not shown) and the display device 32 to reveal one or a plurality of selected awards. Fig. 12 illustrates gaming device 10 having an area above the display  
15 device 32, on the front side of the gaming device 10, on which to position the display mechanism 110. Display mechanism 110 is preferably juxtaposed next to the display device 32, as shown, such that a directional indicator, such as the arrow displayed as the indicia of selector 56 can readily direct the player to the display mechanism. That said, the present  
20 invention contemplates positioning the display mechanism 110 to the left of, to the right of and underneath as well as above the display device 32.



The doors 112 and 114 are preferably constructed of an opaque or non-transparent material such as aluminum, steel, stainless steel, opaque plastic or opaque fiberglass. The doors thus hide any indicia displayed by the gaming device on a secondary display behind said doors when said doors are closed. The present invention contemplates using said doors as a separate masking device. The doors are preferably not selectable, as the masking selectors 54 and 58 preferably are. The gaming device therefore preferably includes a touch screen selector 56 for selecting an award associated with the display mechanism 110. The selector for the display mechanism 110 can alternatively be a separate electro-mechanical front panel mountable input device 33.



Referring now to Fig. 13, the display mechanism 110 is illustrated with the mechanical doors open. When the controller reveals the award associated with the selector 56 and the display mechanism 110, the game opens doors 112 and 114 in the manner described above. A secondary display device 116 is preferably mounted to the gaming device 10 behind the display mechanism 110. In one embodiment, the secondary display device 116 can be any known video monitor, television screen, dot matrix display, CRT, LED, LCD or electro-luminescent display. This simulated secondary display device 116 can be color or monochrome although, preferably, the display is color. The simulated secondary display device is connected to the controller of gaming device 10 in the same manner as display device 32, illustrated in Fig. 2. The simulated secondary display device can also contain a touch screen 46 and associated touch screen controller 48.

Referring now to Fig. 14, a preferred secondary display device embodiment 116 is illustrated, wherein the secondary display 116 includes two rollers 118 and 120. One roller 118 is a drive roller and is suitably attached to a motor 121 and a bearing 122, which are fixed to the gaming device 10. The motor 121 can thus rotate the roller 118 clockwise or counterclockwise as determined by the controller of gaming device 10. The motor 121 can be a stepper motor having a drive (not shown) and programmable indexer (not shown), which are well known in the art and

The belt 124 preferably displays a plurality of awards, such as the award #3, award #4 and award #5 illustrated by Fig. 14. The belt 124 can display any award indicia designed by the implementor including numerical award values, an image in conjunction with a value and a character in conjunction with a value. In certain embodiments, the display can include one or more images and/or characters. The motor 1210, preferably a stepper motor as described above, is programmable and can rotate the belt in two directions, using variable velocities and accelerations and stop the belt at any time to display any award desired by the implementor.

In another embodiment (not illustrated), the secondary display device 116 is a separate paystop display containing one or more mechanical reels, wherein each reel includes a plurality of award values. It should be appreciated that the implementor can create other different

mechanical award generating mechanisms, such as a spinning wheel, and the present invention is not limited to the embodiments herein disclosed.

In any secondary display embodiment, the secondary display 116 is capable of displaying a randomly generated value such as the 450 credits shown on the secondary display 116 of Fig. 13. The game can generate the value before opening the doors 112 and 114 or after, as desired by the implementor. The game preferably associates the display mechanism 110, as illustrated, with one selector 56 and accordingly with the award associated with selector 56.

Referring now to Fig. 15, the present invention contemplates an alternative embodiment, wherein the display mechanism 110 reveals the awards for a plurality of or for all three selectors 54, 56 and 58. In this embodiment, a plurality and preferably all of the selectors, merely enable the player to input a selection but do not otherwise reveal or unmask an award. When a player picks one of the selectors, the game preferably carries out the appropriate reveal sequence, described above, upon the secondary display 116 of the display mechanism 110.

For example, referring to the reveal sequence illustrated with the row 80 of Fig. 9, if the player elects to forgo the initial award, tries for the enticement award and selects the low valued consolation award: (i) the doors 112 and 114 open, the game first reveals the intermediate consolation award and the doors close; (ii) the doors 112 and 114 open,

the game secondly reveals the player's selection of the low valued consolation award and the doors close; and (iii) the doors 112 and 114 open, the game reveals the high valued enticement award and the doors close. In another example, the doors 112 and 114 open once, the game  
5 displays the entire reveal sequence and the doors close. The present invention contemplates any combination of these two examples revealing any reveal sequence designed by the implementor. If the player elects to play it safe and select the initial award, the game can: (i) reveal all values with the doors opening and closing one time; (ii) reveal individual values  
10 with the doors opening and closing a plurality of times; or (iii) provide any suitable reveal means on the display device 32 such as enabling selectors 54, 56 and 58 to once again reveal or unmask the awards.

While the present invention is described in connection with what is presently considered to be the most practical and preferred embodiments,  
15 it should be appreciated that the invention is not limited to the disclosed embodiments, and is intended to cover various modifications and equivalent arrangements included within the spirit and scope of the claims. Modifications and variations in the present invention may be made without departing from the novel aspects of the invention as defined in the claims,  
20 and this application is limited only by the scope of the claims.

## CLAIMS

The invention is hereby claimed as follows:

- 5     1.     A gaming device comprising:
- an initial award offered to a player having a value;
- a plurality of masked awards, one of said masked awards being an  
         enticement award having a value greater than the value of said initial  
         award, and one of said masked awards being a consolation award having  
10     a value less than the value of said initial award;
- means for disclosing information about said awards to said player  
         including that one of said masked awards is an enticement award having a  
         value greater than said value of said initial award; and
- means for enabling said player to keep said initial award or to  
15     select another masked award.
2.     The gaming device of Claim 1, wherein said disclosure means  
         includes means for informing said player of the value of said initial award.
- 20     3.     The gaming device of Claim 1, wherein said disclosure means  
         includes means for informing said player of the value of said enticement  
         award.

4. The gaming device of Claim 1, wherein said disclosure means includes means for informing said player of the value of said consolation award.

5

5. The gaming device Claim 1, wherein said disclosure means includes means for disclosing the value of said initial award and said enticement award.

10 6. The gaming device of Claim 1, which includes a plurality of initial awards.

7. The gaming device of Claim 1, which includes a plurality of enticement awards.

15

8. The gaming device of Claim 1, which includes a plurality of consolation awards.

9. The gaming device of Claim 1, which includes at least one display  
20 device connected to a controller of said gaming device, wherein each display reveals a value of at least one award after said player selects an award.

10. A method for operating a gaming device, said method comprising the steps of:

- (a) offering an initial award to a player;
- 5 (b) displaying a plurality of masked awards to said player;
- (c) disclosing to said player that one of said masked awards has a value greater than the value of said initial award;
- (d) providing one of said masked awards such that it has a value less than the value of said initial award; and
- 10 (e) enabling said player to select to keep said initial award or to select one of said masked awards.

11. The method of Claim 10, which includes disclosing the value of said initial award to the player before the player's selection.

15

12. The method of Claim 10, which includes disclosing the value of said award greater than the initial award to the player before the player's selection.

20 13. The method of Claim 10, which includes disclosing the value of said award lower than the initial award to the player before the player's selection.

14. The method of Claim 10, which includes disclosing the values of the initial award and the award having a value greater than the initial award to the player before the player's selection.

5

15. A method for revealing masked awards in a gaming device, said method comprising the steps of:

- 10
- (a) displaying a plurality of masked awards to a player, one of said masked awards having a minimum value less than the values of the other masked awards, one of said masked awards having a maximum value greater than the values of the other masked awards, and at least one of said masked awards having an intermediate value greater than said minimum value and less than said maximum value;
  - 15 (b) enabling said player to select at least one of said masked awards; and
  - (c) revealing said award having an intermediate value first if said player selects said award having said minimum value.

20 16. The method of Claim 15, which includes the step of revealing said award having said maximum value last if said player selects said award having said minimum value.



- (a) displaying a plurality of masked awards to a player, one of said masked awards having a minimum value less than the values of the other masked awards, one of said masked awards having a maximum value greater than the values of the other masked awards, and at least one of said masked awards having an intermediate value greater than said minimum value and less than said maximum value;
- (b) enabling said player to select at least one of said masked awards; and
- (c) revealing said award having said minimum value first if said player selects said award having an intermediate value.

18. The method of Claim 17, which includes the step of revealing said award having said maximum value last if said player selects said award having an intermediate value.

20 19. A method for revealing masked awards in a gaming device, said  
method comprising the steps of:



- (b) enabling said player to select at least one of said masked awards; and
- (c) revealing said award having said maximum value last if said player selects said award having said maximum value.

23. The method of Claim 21, which includes the step of revealing an  
award having an intermediate value first if said player selects said award  
15 having said maximum value.

24. The method of Claim 21, which includes the step of randomly determining whether to reveal said award having said minimum value or an award having an intermediate value first if said player selects said award having said maximum value.

25. The method of Claim 24, wherein said random determination includes an equal probability of revealing said award having said minimum value or an award having an intermediate value first.

5 26. A method for revealing masked awards in a gaming device, said method comprising the steps of:

- 10 (a) displaying a known award and a plurality of masked awards to a player, one of said masked awards having a minimum value less than the values of the other masked awards, one of said masked awards having a maximum value greater than the values of the other masked awards, and at least one of said masked awards having an intermediate value greater than said minimum value and less than said maximum value;
- 15 (b) enabling said player to select said known award or at least one of said masked awards; and
- (c) revealing said award having said maximum value last if said player selects said known award.

20 27. The method of Claim 26, which includes the step of revealing said award having said minimum value first if said player selects said known award.

10

15

- (a) displaying a known award and a plurality of masked awards to a player, two of said masked awards having higher values than said known award, and a plurality of said masked awards having a lower value than said known award;
- (b) enabling said player to select said known award or at least one of said masked awards;

- (c) revealing all non-selected lower value awards;
- (d) revealing one high value award;
- (e) revealing a selected lower value award; and
- (f) revealing the other high value award.

5

32. A method for revealing masked awards in a gaming device, said method comprising the steps of:

10

- (a) displaying a known award and a plurality of masked awards to a player, two of said masked awards having higher values than said known award, and a plurality of said masked awards having a lower value than said known award;

15

- (b) enabling said player to select said known award or at least one of said masked awards;
- (c) revealing all but one lower value award;
- (d) revealing a non-selected high value award;
- (e) revealing a remaining lower value award; and
- (f) revealing a selected high value award.

20

33. A system for revealing masked awards in a gaming device, said system comprising:

a player award provided by said gaming device to a player, said player award being selected from a plurality of awards, and said player award being revealed after another award is revealed; and

5 a highest valued award having the highest value compared to values of a plurality of awards, said highest valued award being revealed last.

34. The system of Claim 33, which includes a primary display device connected to a controller of said gaming device, said primary display  
10 device including a plurality of player selectable masked awards and means for revealing at least one of said awards.

35. The system of Claim 33, which includes a secondary display device connected to a controller of said gaming device, said secondary display  
15 device including means for revealing at least one of said masked awards.

36. The system of Claim 35, wherein said revealing means includes at least one mechanical door that opens to disclose at least one of said masked awards.

20

37. The system of Claim 34, which includes a secondary display device connected to said controller, said secondary display device including at

least one mechanical door that opens to disclose at least one of said masked awards, and said primary display device including means for enabling the opening of said door.



## ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

The present invention provides a gaming device, whereby the game awards an initial award to a player, discloses to a player that a higher valued enticement award is available and selectable, and enables  
5 the player to selectively swap the initial award for an opportunity to select the enticement award. The game preferably discloses the value of the initial award and the enticement award. The game masks the enticement award in a pattern along with one or more masked consolation awards, the consolation awards having values less than the value of the initial  
10 award. The game reveals the awards in a predetermined sequence, which attempts to maximize the player's excitement and enjoyment by applying two assumptions: (1) waiting to reveal the player's award as long as possible promotes excitement and enjoyment; and (2) waiting to reveal the enticement award last further promotes excitement and enjoyment.  
15 The game can reveal awards via a video monitor or via a secondary display device having mechanical doors that open and close.

FIG.1

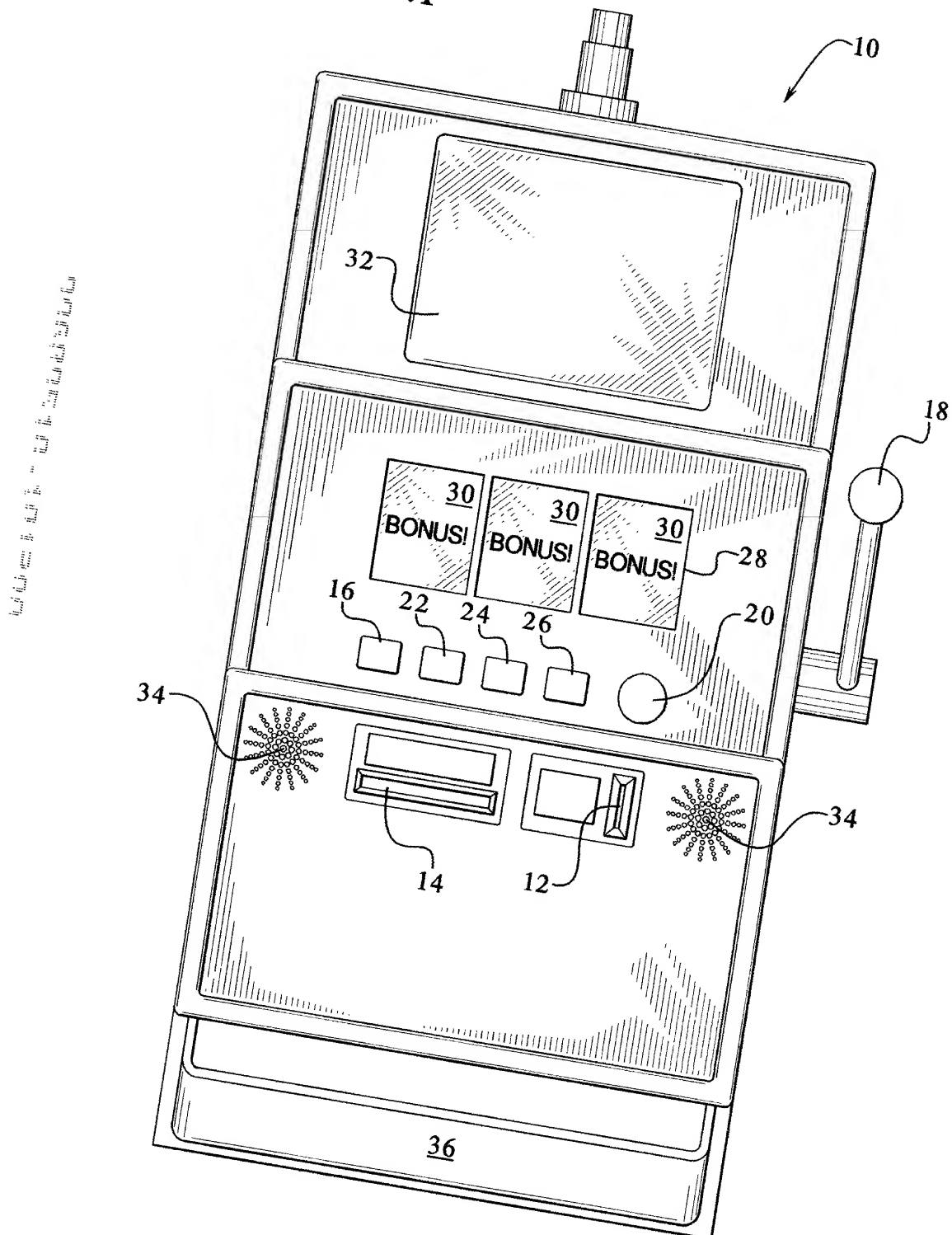


FIG.2

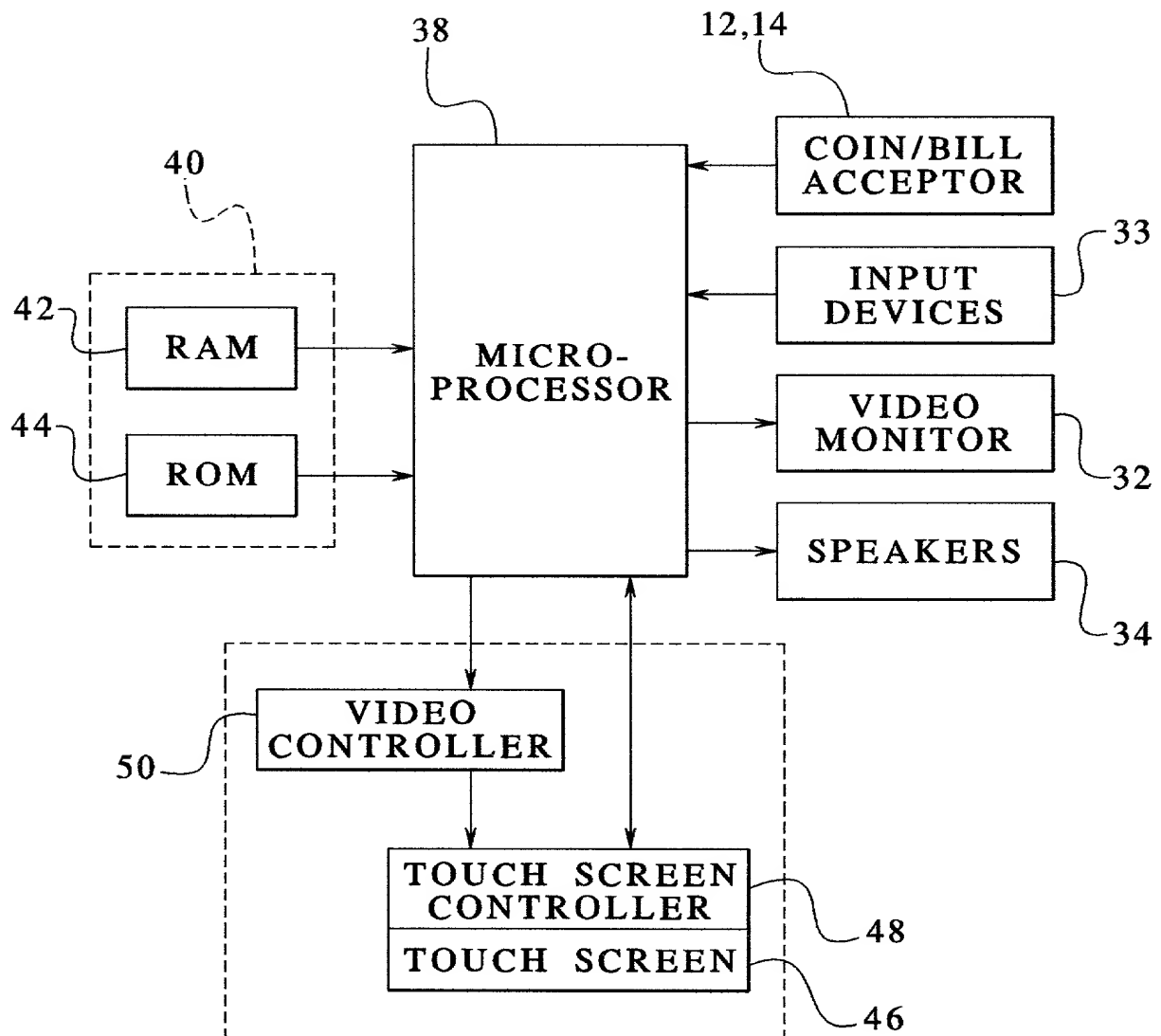


FIG.3

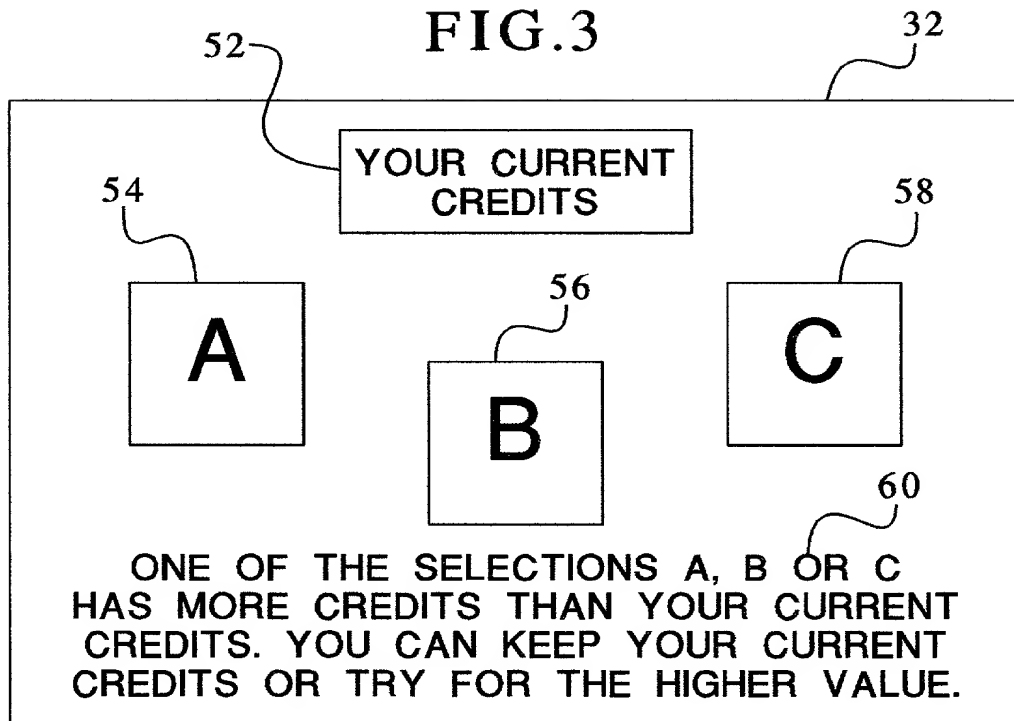
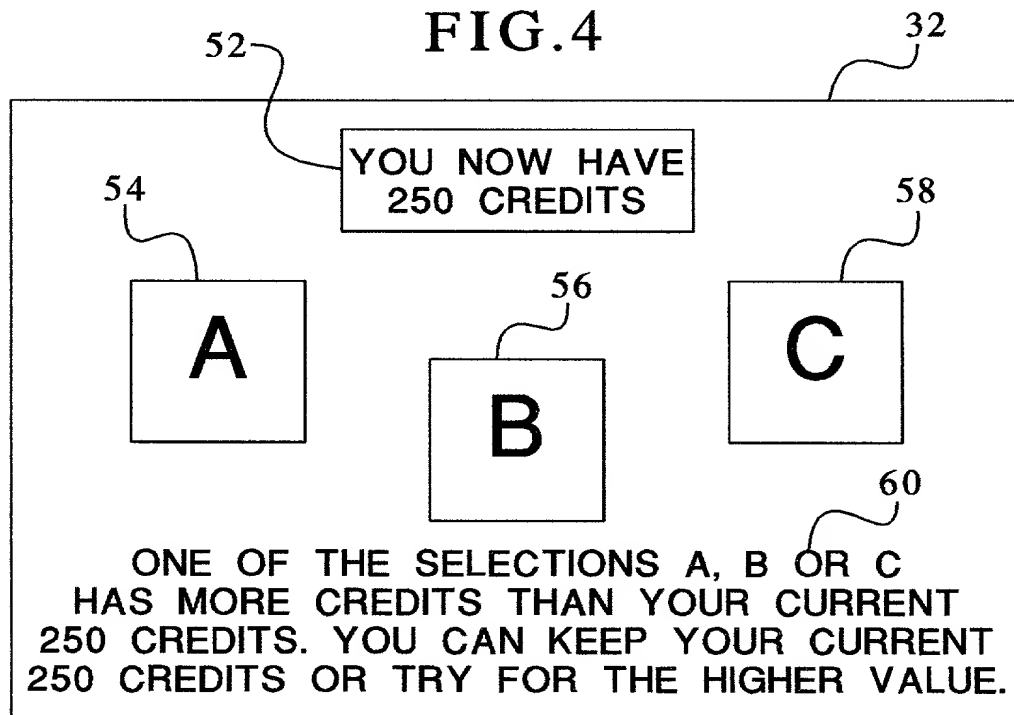


FIG.4







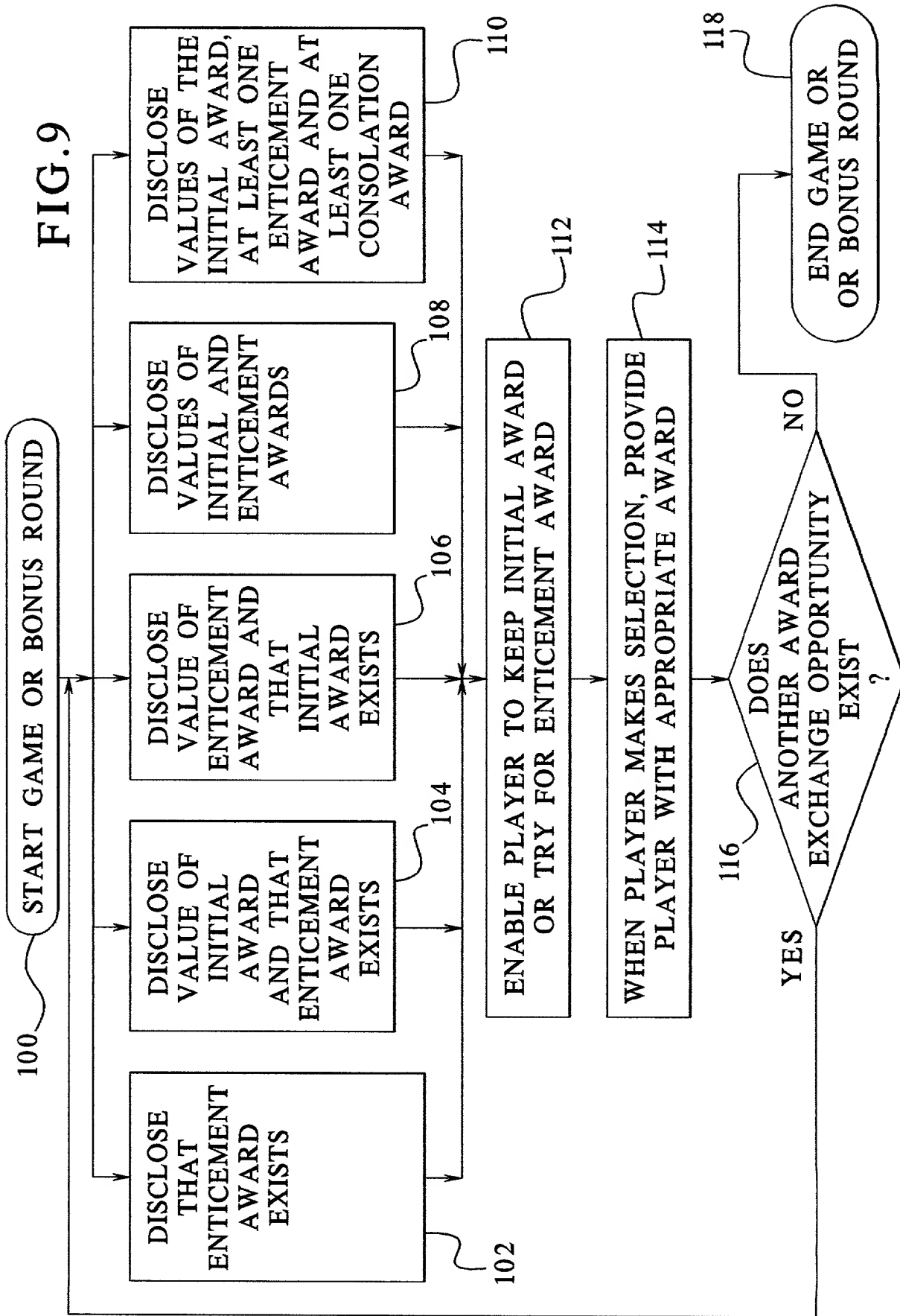


FIG.10

	70	72	74	76
68	PLAYER'S SELECTIONS	GAME FIRST REVEALS	GAME SECONDLY REVEALS	GAME FINALLY REVEALS
78	INITIAL AWARD	RANDOM EXCEPT FOR HIGH	RANDOM EXCEPT FOR HIGH	HIGH VALUE AWARD
80	LOW VALUED AWARD	AN INTERMEDIATE AWARD	PLAYER'S SELECTIONS	HIGH VALUE AWARD
82	AN INTERMEDIATE AWARD	LOW VALUED AWARD	PLAYER'S SELECTIONS	HIGH VALUE AWARD
84	HIGH VALUED AWARD	RANDOM EXCEPT FOR HIGH	RANDOM EXCEPT FOR HIGH	PLAYER'S SELECTIONS





FIG.12

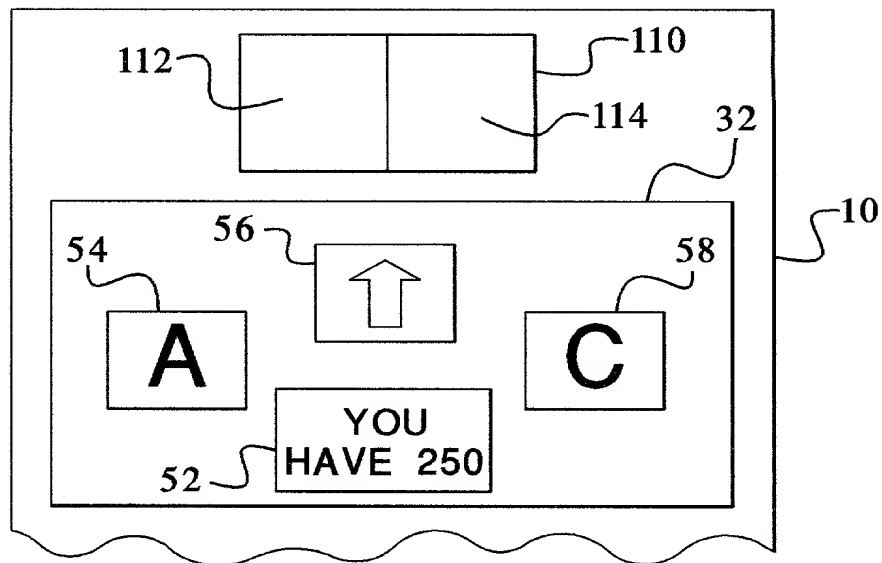


FIG.13

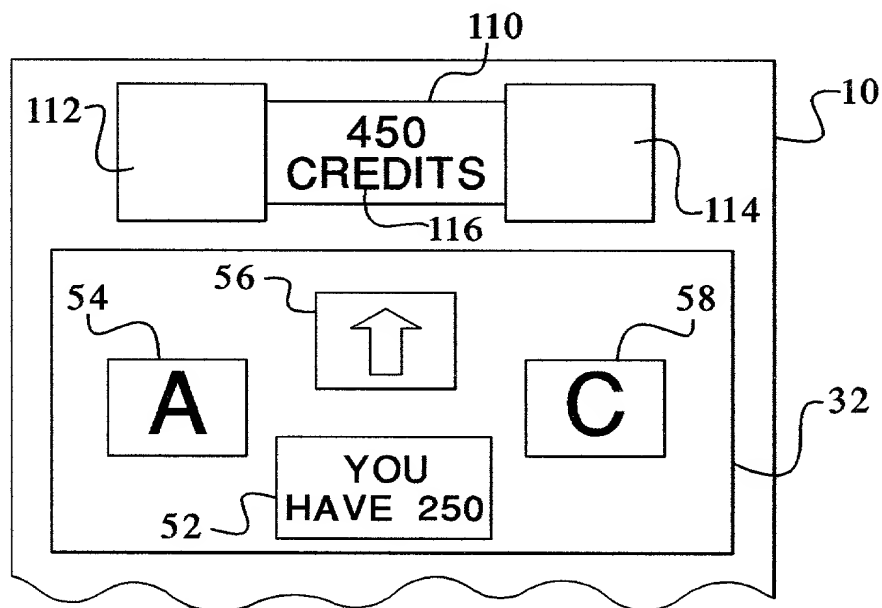
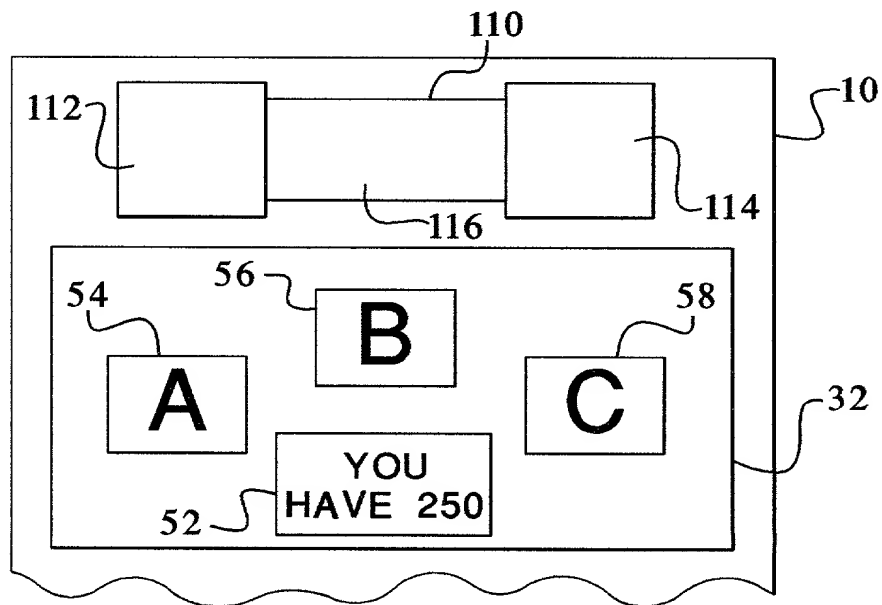


FIG.15





Docket No.  
0112300/140

# Declaration and Power of Attorney For Patent Application

## English Language Declaration

As a below named inventor, I hereby declare that:

My residence, post office address and citizenship are as stated below next to my name,

I believe I am the original, first and sole inventor (if only one name is listed below) or an original, first and joint inventor (if plural names are listed below) of the subject matter which is claimed and for which a patent is sought on the invention entitled

**GAMING DEVICE HAVING AN AWARD EXCHANGE BONUS ROUND AND METHOD FOR REVEALING AWARD EXCHANGE POSSIBILITIES**

the specification of which

(check one)

☒ is attached hereto.

☐ was filed on \_\_\_\_\_ as United States Application No. or PCT International Application Number \_\_\_\_\_ and was amended on \_\_\_\_\_ (if applicable)

I hereby state that I have reviewed and understand the contents of the above identified specification, including the claims, as amended by any amendment referred to above.

I acknowledge the duty to disclose to the United States Patent and Trademark Office all information known to me to be material to patentability as defined in Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations, Section 1.56.

I hereby claim foreign priority benefits under Title 35, United States Code, Section 119(a)-(d) or Section 365(b) of any foreign application(s) for patent or inventor's certificate, or Section 365(a) of any PCT International application which designated at least one country other than the United States, listed below and have also identified below, by checking the box, any foreign application for patent or inventor's certificate or PCT International application having a filing date before that of the application on which priority is claimed.

Prior Foreign Application(s)

Priority Not Claimed

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Number)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Country)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Day/Month/Year Filed)

☐

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Number)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Country)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Day/Month/Year Filed)

☐

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Number)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Country)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Day/Month/Year Filed)

☐

I hereby claim the benefit under 35 U.S.C. Section 119(e) of any United States provisional application(s) listed below:

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Application Serial No.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Filing Date)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Application Serial No.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Filing Date)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Application Serial No.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Filing Date)

I hereby claim the benefit under 35 U. S. C. Section 120 of any United States application(s), or Section 365(c) of any PCT International application designating the United States, listed below and, insofar as the subject matter of each of the claims of this application is not disclosed in the prior United States or PCT International application in the manner provided by the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. Section 112, I acknowledge the duty to disclose to the United States Patent and Trademark Office all information known to me to be material to patentability as defined in Title 37, C. F. R., Section 1.56 which became available between the filing date of the prior application and the national or PCT International filing date of this application:

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Application Serial No.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Filing Date)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Status)  
(patented, pending, abandoned)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Application Serial No.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Filing Date)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Status)  
(patented, pending, abandoned)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Application Serial No.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Filing Date)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Status)  
(patented, pending, abandoned)

I hereby declare that all statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true; and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under Section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application or any patent issued thereon.

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